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Letter dated 18 January 2007 from the Secretary-General to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to refer to the decision adopted by the Peace and Security Council of the African Union at its 40th meeting, held in Addis Ababa on 6 October 2005. I also refer to Security Council resolution 1633 (2005) of 21 October 2005 in which the Council supported the establishment of an International Working Group to assist the Government of Côte d'Ivoire in the implementation of its programme and to consolidate and strengthen the existing follow-up mechanisms.

In this regard, I am forwarding the text of the communiqué issued by the International Working Group at the conclusion of its twelfth ministerial meeting, held in Abidjan on 12 January 2007 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would bring the communiqué to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) **Ban** Ki-moon

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Annex

[Original: French]

Final communiqué of the twelfth ministerial meeting of the International Working Group on Côte d'Ivoire

Abidjan, 12 January 2007

1. The twelfth ministerial meeting of the International Working Group (IWG) was held in Abidjan on 12 January 2007 under the co-chairmanship of Rodolphe Adada, Minister of State, Minister of Foreign Affairs and of la Francophonie of the Congo, and Pierre Schori, special representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations for Côte d'Ivoire. In attendance were the Ministers of France, Ghana, Niger, the Republic of South Africa and Germany, as current President of the European Union, as well as the Special Representative of the current Chairman of the African Union, the European Union Commissioner for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Assistance, the President of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Commission, the High Representative for Elections in Côte d'Ivoire and the representatives of Benin, Guinea, Nigeria, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, the African Union Commission, the International Organization of la Francophonie and the World Bank.

2. The Group heard a briefing by the Prime Minister on the state of implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1721 (2006), starting with the concrete benchmarks established by the IWG on 1 December 2006. The Group also heard a statement by the Minister of State and Secretary-General of the Forces Nouvelles, who expressed his readiness to accept the Head of State's offer for direct dialogue on condition that this dialogue serves as a mechanism to accelerate the implementation of resolution 1721 (2006). The Group further heard the reports of the High Representative for Elections and the Force Commanders of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) and the French force (Operation Licorne).

3. Three weeks before the expiry of the deadline of 1 February, by which time the African Union and ECOWAS must re-examine the situation, in keeping with paragraph 21 of the resolution, the Group notes that there is a total stalemate, mainly owing to the refusal of certain Ivorian parties to accept and implement resolution 1721 (2006) despite the efforts made, in particular, by the Mediation Group.

4. Taking into account the proposal for direct dialogue made by the Head of State, the Group reaffirms its commitment to permanent consultations between the Ivorian parties with a view to the full implementation of resolution 1721 (2006). This direct dialogue must focus on the implementation of concrete and precise solutions, namely with regard to identification, the disarmament process, the restructuring of the armed forces, and the holding of credible elections throughout the national territory.

5. The Group expresses its deep concern that the current stalemate is prolonging the suffering of the populations, exacerbating political and social tensions and

threatening to destabilize the West African subregion. In this regard, the Group suggests the following measures to the Security Council:

(a) To urge the current chairmen of the African Union and ECOWAS to convene, as soon as possible, meetings of the main Ivorian parties in order to unblock the situation and relaunch the implementation of resolution 1721 (2006);

(b) To dispatch an ad hoc mission of the Security Council to Côte d'Ivoire in order to support the action of the African leaders, and to secure the firm commitment of the Ivorian leaders to fully implement resolution 1721 (2006).

6. The Group will hold its next meeting on 23 February 2007 in Côte d'Ivoire.